

The Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center

Information you'll need about the hospital at NIH

Overview of the Clinical Center

Welcome

The Clinical Center is the hospital and clinics at the National Institutes of Health. It is the world's largest hospital devoted solely to research. You will be among patients who--like you--are participating in a clinical research study.

Our doctors, nurses, health-care professionals and support staff are committed to providing the best in medical and hospital care for you. Your participation in clinical research at NIH is an investment in health and health care.

Why you were selected

You were selected as a Clinical Center patient on the basis of the medical information provided. You are one of several people with a similar condition who will be invited to take part in a research program. By studying and observing many people with a particular disorder, we hope to find common factors that will help us to better understand the condition.

Some patients at the Clinical Center receive new treatments, which may offer the promise of helping you or others with certain conditions. NIH doctors carefully monitor their patients' response to these new treatments. For other patients, too little is known about their condition to begin new treatment. These patients have been accepted for admission to enable us to gain vital information about their disease.

The research protocol

Whether or not you receive new treatments, you will be admitted under a care and observation plan, called a protocol, developed to study your condition. This plan outlines what researchers need to know about your condition and how they will get this knowledge. Before you take part in a protocol, it will be explained to you. You'll be encouraged to ask questions, and asked to give your written consent before any research or treatment takes place. The requirements of a protocol and the status of your health determine how long you will stay at the Clinical Center and whether you will be an inpatient or an outpatient.

The hospital and clinics

The Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center is the research hospital for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). NIH is one of five health agencies of the Public Health Service, which, in turn, is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The principal medical research arm of DHHS, NIH conducts basic, clinical, and applied research related to a broad spectrum of diseases and health problems. It represents the nation's commitment to biomedical research and improving the health of its people. Thousands of research projects are in progress on the campus. Over the years, NIH has supported the work of 76 Nobel Prize winners.

NIH is made up of many Institutes and Centers created to study cancer, heart, lung, and blood diseases, neurological and communicative diseases, eye disorders, allergy and infectious diseases, dental disorders, child health and human development, metabolic, diabetes, digestive, and kidney diseases, arthritis, musculoskeletal and skin diseases, mental health disorders, alcoholism, and the effects of aging.

Patients at the Clinical Center are treated without charge. Unlike most hospitals, the Clinical Center does not offer general diagnostic and treatment services. Admission is selective. Patients are chosen by Institute physicians solely because they have an illness being studied by those Institutes.

Thousands of patients are admitted yearly to the 14-story facility, which houses in-patient wards and outpatient clinics. Healthy people are also admitted every year to serve as healthy volunteers (clinical research volunteers).

A unique feature of the Clinical Center is the closeness of laboratories and patients, often merely the width of a hospital hallway. Traffic across this short distance is decidedly two-way. Advances realized in the laboratory are brought to the bedside, and new areas for laboratory investigation are suggested by the health-care team's observations of patients. Built in 1953, the Clinical Center was specially designed to foster this collaboration and exchange of information between basic scientists and clinicians.

The Clinical Center is a member of the American Hospital Association and the Maryland Hospital Association, and is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.